

Salvation Is Of The Lord

By David J. Stewart | October 2008 | Updated September 2014

“Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly... Salvation is of the LORD.” —Jonah 2:9

I was reading the Old Testament Book of Jonah the other day and stumbled across a truth that I never saw before. We often hear the Biblical story about Jonah and the Whale; but I've never heard anyone address the prayer which Jonah cried out from the whale's belly.

Some critics of the *King James Bible* have quarreled over the word “whale” in the Bible. Matthew 12:40 in the *New King James Version* (NKJV) and the *New International Version* (NIV) errantly change “whale” to “fish.” The Greek word used in Matthew 12:40 is *ketos*. The scientific study of whales just happens to be - CETOLOGY - from the Greek *ketos* for whale and *logos* for study! The scientific name for whales just happens to be - CETACEANS - from the Greek *ketos* for whale! So “whale” is the correct translation, which the King James translators faithfully preserved.

Jonah's Desperate Prayer from the Whale's Belly

Here is what Jonah prayed to God from the inside of the whale's belly...

“Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. **They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of**



thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD. And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.” —Jonah 2:1-10

Jonah said something remarkable in his prayer to God. Jonah stated that people who trust in “lying vanities” for their salvation literally “forsake their own mercy.” That is to say, they forfeit the free gift of eternal life which God in His loving mercy has made available to all mankind through the sacrifice of His only begotten Son. This would be equivalent to the Apostle Paul’s statement in Galatians 5:4 ... “Ye are fallen from grace.” There is ONLY one way to Heaven and that is through the precious redeeming blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (1st Peter 1:18,19). Anyone who tries to merit Heaven some “other way” has fallen from the saving grace of God, and has forsaken the mercy which God has bestowed upon them through the gift of eternal life found only in Christ Jesus (Acts 4:10-12; John 10:1,9).

God’s Merciful Gift of Eternal Life Versus the Lying Vanities of a False Gospel

As I read Jonah’s plea to God, I couldn’t help but immediately think of all the religious people in the world today who trust in “lying vanities” to get them to Heaven. They have forsaken the very mercy that God has bestowed upon them through His precious Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, the wrath of God abideth upon them (John 3:36).

Jonah knew that “SALVATION IS OF THE LORD” and pondered over it in the whale’s belly. I find it very interesting that Jonah was thinking about the merciful gift of God, and of those who trust in “lying vanities” which lead to Hellfire. You see, when Jonah was fleeing from God he was only thinking about himself; but now that Jonah is in woe and desperation, he is thinking about what is important to God—SOULWINNING!!! I believe Jonah was thinking about the unsaved inhabitants of Nineveh (where God had told him to go preach the Gospel). Jonah promised God to obey His will if his life was spared. God caused the whale to spew Jonah forth on dry ground. Interestingly, Jonah made a 3-day journey in just ONE DAY. Jonah ran all the way to Nineveh after God delivered him from being entangled in weeds in the whale’s belly in the depths of the sea. That’s quite a testimony.

Many religious people today have a false sense of peace, like the calm in the eye of a hurricane, because they’ve been lied to by some unholy priest or arrogant minister. Death and destruction await them after the calm is gone, i.e., when they enter into eternity in their sins without the Lord. The most dangerous thing you’ll ever do is trust what men say. You’d better do what Jesus commanded in John 5:39... **SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!!!** You’ll never go wrong listening to the Word of God.

The Bible is filled with warnings about listening to people...

“It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.” —Psalm 118:8

“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” —Proverb 16:25

“Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.” —Jeremiah 7:8

“Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.” —Jeremiah 17:5

“God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.” —Romans 3:4

“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” —Matthew 15:8,9

Jonah knew that **SALVATION IS OF THE LORD**, and that those who trust in “lying vanities” are traveling on a highway to Hell. Phooey on what El Papa over in Rome says. Phooey on what your priest says (who's saturated with sins himself). Phooey on that Lutheran minister who arrogantly and falsely claims to have power to forgive your sins—NO HE DOESN'T. The only One Who can forgive anyone's sins has nail-scared hands and feet—Jesus Christ. Believe on Him!!!

What Will it Take?

Jonah was your typical person who forgets about God until tragedy strikes. It's sad, but true, that most of us don't think about what pleases God until we're in the back of an ambulance or in a dangerous situation. Whereas Jonah was stubbornly fleeing from the will of God before; now he is in the morbid belly of a whale facing imminent death, crying out in repentance for God to deliver him. Whereas Jonah wasn't concerned about fulfilling the will of God just days earlier; now he is desperately desiring to do God's will and preach the Gospel to lost sinners who trust in “lying vanities.”

What will it take for us to surrender our lives to do God's will? Why does God always have to send a whale to devour us, fiery serpents to bite us (Numbers 21:6), an evil spirit to afflict us (1st Samuel 16:14) or a thorn in the flesh to humble us (2nd Corinthians 12:7). Mankind is sinfully proud and stubborn. Deuteronomy 6:12 warns, “***Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.***” It is so easy to become ungrateful for all the wonderful things that God has done for us. So often as believers we forget about the very God Who brought us forth out of darkness (bondage to sin) and gave to us new life in Jesus Christ.

No Human Effort is Expected, Required, Nor Allowed in Salvation

Jonah said that he would sacrifice unto the Lord with “a voice of thanksgiving.” Mankind has no part in salvation other than to receive it through faith in Christ's sacrifice on the cross and say, “Thank you.” It is the precious blood of Jesus that washes away our sins, and nothing that we have done. Many bad pastors and evangelists these days have adopted a false plan of salvation that teaches partial faith in Christ plus human effort. Whether the satanic Roman Catholic religion that requires good works for salvation, or the satanic teachers of Lordship Salvation who requires forsaking bad works to be saved,

both are works, and both of these groups of heretics are corrupting the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus (2nd Corinthians 11:4-5).

Salvation is receiving, not giving. Salvation is received, not achieved. We have zero self-righteousness of our own. Even our own self-perceived goodness is “filthy rags” in the sight of Almighty God (Isaiah 64:6). The very reason why God sent His Son to die and shed His blood at Calvary’s cross for our sins is because we cannot save ourselves. If there are any sins at all on our eternal record, no amount of good can expunge them. Only the blood of Jesus can cleanse our sins away forever (1st John 1:7; 1st Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 1:5; 7:14).

Jonah had a spirit of thanksgiving because he knew that salvation is based upon GOD’S MERCY and not upon man’s own self-righteousness or any other “lying vanities.” Man has in inherent sinful tendency to add human effort to God’s simple plan of salvation by believing the Gospel (Mark 1:15). The only thing that you need to repent of to be saved is from whatever is hindering you from coming to Christ to be saved. Jesus told the Scribes and Pharisees that if they had repented, they would have also believed on Him as did the harlots and publicans. **Matthew 21:32, “For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.”**

Repentance is a Change of Mind, Not a Change of Behavior

Repentance is necessary for salvation, but Biblical repentance means “a change of mind” (*Metanoeo*), not *a change of behavior* (*metamellomai*). The latter is what Judas experienced, feeling remorse for betraying Christ and even bringing back the 30 pieces of silver to return them (which the Pharisees refused, but Judas tossed them on the floor and fled). Judas went to Hell in his sins. You don’t get saved by having a relationship with Jesus as Judas did. You don’t get saved by forsaking your bad works as Judas did. This is false repentance, and it is epidemic in our Independent Baptist churches today, because of the wicked influence of apostates Rick Warren, Billy Graham, John MacArthur, Ray Comfort, Chip Ingram and others who prorogate the heresy of Lordship Salvation.

While in the belly of the whale, Jonah pondered the great Biblical truth that Salvation is of the Lord, not man. No human effort is required, expected, nor allowed in God’s salvation of the repentant sinner. If a person must change their behavior to be saved, then salvation is by partial faith in Christ plus human effort. The man who believes the gospel has repented, for without repentance (changing one’s mind from what you want to do to get to Heaven, to what God says you must do to get to Heaven), you would never come to Christ at all to be saved. Repentance is not the same thing as believing, but they are two parts to one step. Repentance is not a separate step from faith. You don’t repent first and then believe second. It doesn’t work that way. Repentance and faith happen simultaneously (at the same time).

Please understand that the modern English dictionary defines the word “repent” (remorse, sorrow, to turn from sin) very differently than the Greek meaning which Jesus used in the Bible, which is “a change of mind.” Modern dictionaries use the religious meaning of the word, not the Biblical meaning. No doubt this has caused many sincere people to die in their sins and spend eternity in the Lake of Fire.

Certainly, there are people who make false professions of faith in Christ, but it is not because they are still holding onto their beloved pet sins; but rather, it is usually because they don't truly understand how salvation works, having adopted Christianity as a philosophy, culture, organization or business instead of as a new birth as God intended it to be (John 1:12-14). Satan's greatest weapon is to con people into living the Christian life without ever being born again!

Salvation is completely of the Lord Jesus Christ. We simply receive the gift of God by completely resting in Christ's sacrifice on the cross and His resurrection. You don't even have to ask God to save you, because He has already told us what to do to be saved, which is to simply believe that Christ died on the cross for our sins and rose again. Jesus is precious!

Ye Must Be Born Again! | You Need HIS Righteousness!



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